



ESTABLISHED 1877—NEW SERIES.

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## ILL-FATED.

The Veteran's Eldest Son, Vagabond Victor.

## PLAYING DUETS.

A Dutch Hide with Russian Tanning.

## KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

Susanna Ivanovna Plays the Piano for Us.

BY IVAN TUGENIEFF.

(Translated from the Russian by George Kennan.)

## IX.

"HANKS to you, I was put in a very unpleasant position this evening," said I to Foustof as we walked home together. "You told me that that young woman—what do you call her?—Susanna, was Mr. Ratch's daughter; and she isn't his daughter at all! She's only a step-daughter."

"That's so! Did I say she was his daughter? Anyhow, what's the difference?"

"But that old Ratch, Alexander! I don't like him at all! Did you notice what that significant mockery he looked at her when he spoke of the Jews? Is it possible that she's a Jewess?" Foustof at first made no reply, but quickened his step a little so as to keep ahead of me, his feet crunching the dry, frosty snow with a sharp, intermittent creak.

"Yes," he said at last, with apparent indifference, "seems to me I have heard something to that effect; her mother, I believe, was of Jewish descent."

"Then Mr. Ratch, when he married the first time, must have married a widow?"

"Very likely."

"Rm! And the Victor that they referred to to-day—is he also a step-child?"

"No! He's an own son. But you seem to think I must know the whole history of the Ratch family! I don't meddle with other people's affairs—neither do I make a practice of asking questions! I'm not one of the curious kind!" I bit my lip. Foustof still hurried on ahead, but just as we approached the house I managed to overtake him, and glanced into his face.

"Tell me," said I, "is Susanna really a fine musician?" He frowned impatiently. "She plays the piano well enough; but," he added, with a grimace, "I give you due notice she is very peculiar and shy. He acted as if he were sorry that he had introduced me to her. I said nothing more, and we parted."

## X.

On the following morning I went to see Foustof again. I was getting so into the habit of being with him every day that I was restless anywhere else. He greeted me with his usual cordiality, but with regard to our call at the Ratches the evening before—not a word! On that subject he was as dumb as if his mouth were full of water. I sat down and began to turn over the leaves of the last number of the "Telescope." Presently the outside door opened and another visitor entered the room. It proved to be the eldest son of Mr. Ratch—the identical Victor whose absence from home during our call of the previous day had given so much dissatisfaction to his father. He was a young fellow of 18 or thereabouts, lean and unattractive in appearance, with a half good-humored, half impudent smile on his dirty face and an expression of weariness and lassitude in his slightly inflamed eyes. He looked very much like his father, except that his features were not so large and had an attractiveness which the former lacked. But even in this attractiveness there seemed to be something bad. He was dressed in the most careless, slovenly style. Half the buttons were off his uniform jacket, one of his boots was burst out at the side, and he exhaled a strong odor of tobacco.

"How are you?" he exclaimed in a hoarse voice, and with that peculiar jerking up of the head and shoulders which I have always noticed in spoiled, headstrong children. "How are you?" I started to go to the University, but you see I've turned up here. Something the matter with my chest this morning; it's all choked up; give me a cigar!" and without taking his hands out of the pockets of his pantaloons he walked slowly across the room, dragging his feet listlessly over the floor, and threw himself down heavily on the divan.

Foustof introduced us to one another, and we found that we were fellow-students at the University, but in different faculties. "You've taken cold, haven't you?" inquired Foustof.

"Cold! No; but the truth is"—here Mr. Ratch, jr., face broadened into what would have been a pleasant smile but for its sudden disclosure of badly-decayed teeth—"the truth is, I was tight yesterday—awful tight! I was that!" he reaffirmed, inhaling a whiff of cigar smoke and coughing. "You see, we were bidding Oshkodoof good-by."

"Where was he going?"

"He's gone to the Caucasus, and he's taken his beloved there with him, too—you've seen her, haven't you?—the black-eyed one, you know, with freckles. What a fool he is!"

"Your father was inquiring about you yesterday," observed Foustof. Victor spit to one side.

"Yes, I heard of it; and so you squatted by our campfire yesterday, did you? Well,

what did you do to amuse yourselves? Play duets?"

"We spent the evening as we usually do," replied Foustof.

"And she, I suppose she pretended to be awfully demure and prim before the new visitor (nodding his head toward me). Wouldn't play, would she?"

"Whom do you mean?" asked Foustof.

"Why, who should I mean! Her Highness, Susanna Ivanovna, of course."

Victor stretched himself out into a still more comfortable attitude on the divan, raised one arm in a half-circle over his head, looked at the palm of his hand, and sniffed huskily to clear his nose. I glanced at Foustof. He

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"Why, who should I mean! Her Highness, Susanna Ivanovna, of course."

But why did she seem so unhappy? and what kind of a woman was she? All these questions came up again and again in my mind, but I felt instinctively that it would not do to go to Foustof for answers to them, so I gave myself up to my own fancies and conjectures. It ended in my going alone to call on the Ratches the following afternoon. No sooner did I open the door and find myself in the dark, narrow hall of Ivan Demyanitch's house than I began to feel embarrassed and ashamed. There flashed through my mind the thought that perhaps Susanna should not show herself at all, and that I should just have to sit there and talk to that detestable old "veteran" and his kitchen-servant of a wife. And even if she does make her appearance, I said to myself, "what then? She's not particularly cordial to me the other night—it isn't likely that she'll be any more so now; and what have I come for, anyhow?" While these thoughts were passing through my mind the boy who came to the door had run to announce me, and I could hear in the adjoining room the voice of Mr. Ratch exclaiming in a tone of surprise and bewilderment, as if he did not quite understand, "What?—How's that?—Who do you say?" Then followed the shuffling of loose slippers across the floor, the door partially opened, and in the aperture appeared the face of Ivan Demyanitch—an unshaven, bristling, ill-matured face—bent upon me with an expression of surly inquiry. Mr. Ratch evidently did not at first know me. In a moment, however, the hard lines in his countenance relaxed, the eyes softened into recognition, and he exclaimed—"Ah! my esteemed friend! It's you! Come in, please! Come in!"

It did not relieve my embarrassment any to feel sure, as I did, that Mr. Ratch, while politely inviting me to come in, was mentally consigning me to the devil. However, there was nothing to do now but go in. I followed my host into the parlor, and there at a small table, with a household expenditure book before her, sat Susanna! She raised her large, dusky eyes to my face for an instant as I entered, and then dropping them again began to bite the ends of her finger nails—a habit which I have often noticed as being characteristic of nervous people.

"Well, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Ratch, striking himself a ringing "spat" on the back side of his right hip; "you see you're caught as at work! Susanna Ivanovna and I were looking over accounts. My wife, you know, isn't very strong in arithmetic, and my eyes trouble me so much that I have to take care of 'em; so I let the rising generation do part of the work; ha-ha! Business must be kept in order."

"However," he added, "it isn't a thing that it's worth while to hurry about; you know it's five bluebacks a month! And what does that amount to! It don't keep me in tobacco; and still he keeps saying 'don't run in debt! don't run in debt!' I'd just like to put him in my place a little while and see what he'd do! I don't get an annuity, either, as some people do." (Victor spoke the last three words with significant emphasis.) "Besides, he's got plenty of money—I know—he needn't play Lazarus with me—he can't fool me with any such trick as that—he's got his own nest well feathered!"

Foustof looked askance at Victor and replied hesitatingly: "Well, all right, I'll talk to your father—and if—in the meantime—you need—perhaps I can let you have a little."

"No! No! What's the use? It's a good deal better to soap the old man. Still," added Victor, reflectively scratching his nose with all five fingers, "if you could, you know, you might just give me 25 roubles. How much do you say I owe you now?"

"You've had 85 roubles, I believe," said Foustof.

"Yes; well, then, this will make 110. I'll pay it back to you all at once."

Foustof went into the next room, brought out a 25-rouble note and handed it to Victor in silence. The latter took it, yawned from ear to ear as he said "thank ye," and then stretching out and contracting his arms and body as if he had been sitting in some tiresome and constrained position, he rose lazily from the divan.

"Fou—ou—ou!" he exclaimed with another yawn, "it's sort of lonesome here, seems to me; guess I'll go over to the 'Italy,' and he started for the door. Foustof's eyes followed him with an expression of mingled eagerness and irresolution, as if he wanted to ask him something, but could not quite make up his mind to do it.

"What annuity was that you spoke of, Victor Ivanitch?" he finally inquired, just as the latter was going out of the door. Victor stopped on the threshold and put on his cap.

"Why! don't you know? Susanna Ivanovna's; she gets an annuity, and there's a most curious story connected with it, too. I'll tell you about it some time; it's a rich thing, batoshka! But the old gentleman—don't forget to pitch into the old gentleman, please! He's got a thick hide, you know—a regular Dutch hide, and it's had a Russian tanning besides; but you can prick him through it if you try hard, only don't do it before my step-mother; he's afraid of her, and she's stungier, if anything, than he is. But you'll know how to manage it; you're a diplomat yourself—good-by!" and the door slammed behind him.

"What a worthless scoundrel that boy is!" exclaimed Foustof, turning away from me to hide his hot, flushed face. I said nothing, and soon afterward took my leave.

XII.

All that day my mind was occupied, to the exclusion of everything else, with thoughts of Foustof, Susanna, and her relatives. I felt a vague, curiosity-rousing consciousness that I was witnessing the evolution of a domestic drama. As far as I could judge, Foustof regarded Susanna with a much deeper feeling than mere friendly interest; and she?—did she also love him?

\*A Moscow restaurant.

Susanna turned away her face.

"I should be very glad," I said hastily. "I should like very much to hear Susanna Ivanovna play; but I wouldn't trouble her for the world if she doesn't wish to."

"Trouble? Nonsense! It's no trouble!" exclaimed Mr. Ratch. "Well, Susanna Ivanovna, do you hear? Eins! zwei! drei!" Susanna went out without making any reply.

XIII.

I did not much expect that she would return, but in a few moments she reappeared, without having even changed her dress, and seating herself in one corner of the room gave me two or three long, earnest, attentive looks. Whether she was that day in a softer, more compliant mood than usual, or whether she saw in my manner toward her the deep respect which I could not help feeling, and which was stronger than even my curiosity or my sympathy, I do not know; but she suddenly rose, went to the piano, and laying her hands irresolutely upon the keyboard turned her head half around over her shoulder toward me and asked what I would like. Then, without giving me an opportunity to answer, she seated herself at the instrument, took out her notes, opened the sheets hurriedly and began to play. I had always loved music and been sensitive to its influence, even as a child; but I knew technically very little about it, and if Mr. Ratch had not murmured disapprovingly, "Aha! wieder dieser Beethoven!" I should not have known what Susanna had chosen. It was, as I afterward learned, the famous Sonata in F minor, Opus 57. Susanna's playing thrilled me with an indescribable delight. I had not anticipated so much power—so much fire—such skillful, dashing execution. The very first measures

raised her head, folded her arms, turned fully around and looked him squarely in the face. In the depths of her dilated, answering eyes there smoldered the dim, unextinguishable fire of ancient hate. It became painful to look at them. "You belong to two different musical generations," I hastened to say, with an air of assumed composure, as if I noticed nothing unusual in their behavior, "and for that reason it is not strange that your tastes disagree; but you must permit me to say, Ivan Demyanitch, that I take my stand on the side of the younger generation. I'm only one of the 'vulgar herd,' of course, but I must confess that I never listened to anything in my life which delighted me and impressed me so much as the—as that piece which Susanna Ivanovna has just played." Ratch turned viciously upon me. "And what makes you think," he cried, his face still purple from coughing, "what right have you to suppose that we care anything about having you in our camp? We don't want you, my dear sir! We should respectfully decline your services with thanks! Let the freekeep his freedom, and let him that is saved rejoice in his own salvation! As for the two generations, that's all very true. It's a hard thing for us who are old to live in harmony with you young people—very hard. We don't agree in anything; neither in art nor in life, not in morals—especially in morals! Isn't that so, Susanna Ivanovna?" Susanna's lip curled with a contemptuous smile.

"On moral questions do not agree and never can agree," Her lips trembled a little, and a threatening expression crossed her face.

"Exactly! Exactly!" assented Mr. Ratch. "I'm not one of your transcendental philosophers. I don't pretend to be able to take such a high, misty view of things; I'm nothing but a plain, straightforward man myself—a slave to my old-fashioned principles." Susanna again smiled.

"I remember rightly, Ivan Demyanitch, you have, nevertheless, been known to act occasionally in entire independence of what other people call 'principles.'"

"Wie so?—that is how—what do you mean—I don't understand."

"You don't understand? Are you, then, so forgetful?" Mr. Ratch seemed to lose his self-possession.

"I—I—," he stammered.

"Yes, you! Mr. Ratch."

There was an instant of silence.

"But stop! Hold on there, if you please!" he exclaimed, recovering himself; "how dare you—"

Susanna suddenly rose, drew herself up to her full height, pressed her folded arms tightly against her breast, and looked him steadily in the eye. She was evidently challenging him to combat. Her whole attitude suddenly became one of attack. A strange, terrible beauty irradiated her face, dark glitter like the flash of steel lighted the depths of her dusky eyes, and the lips which a moment before had been soft and tremulous, hardened into a straight, incorruptible line. Susanna had thrown down the gauntlet, but her adversary, after one quick glance into her face, thought best to decline the challenge. He lowered his head, gathered his feet up under him and collapsed like a suddenly-empty bag. The "veteran of 1812" was cowed—there could not be a doubt of it. Susanna turned her eyes deliberately from him to me, as if calling me to witness the completeness of her victory and the humiliation of her enemy, and then smiling again, for the last time left the room.

The veteran sat for a moment silent and motionless. Then, as if suddenly remembering his forgotten role, he started, sprang up, clapped me on the shoulder, and exclaimed with his resonant laugh: "Ha-ha-ha! See that, now! That young woman and I have lived together for the last 20 years, and still she doesn't know to this day when I am joking and when I'm talking seriously! And you, too, my esteemed friend, looked at me, I thought, rather dubiously. You see, you don't know the old man Ratch yet!"

"Yes I do!" I thought to myself with mingled fear and disgust as I rose to take my leave; "I know you now."

"You haven't found him out yet—you don't understand him!" he repeated, rubbing his stomach as he accompanied me into the hall. "I'm a rough, battered old fellow!—ha-ha!—but I'm good-hearted—by—, I am!"

I rushed headlong down the steps into the street, almost anxious to escape as quickly as possible from this "good-hearted" man.

[To be continued.]

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BY R. J. PATTERSON.

19th Ind., "by R. J. Patterson, First Division, 19th Ind., of the Potomac; Williams Camp, G.A.R., and Waterhouse Camp, Sons of Veterans, Manassas, Ind."

Corporal Tanner,

We like the manner, the feeling you express. It is tempting full of meaning to your comrades in distress.

Every region has a legion of the loyal line of blue, Not deceiving but believing we have a friend in you.

Not requiring but desiring that you keep this neatly course;

Not neglecting but expecting you will put the line have our own.

Since your induction your construction seems to be without a flaw.

In your ruling without fooling of complicated pension law.

Without assuming or presuming we are watching every hour.

All the pledges and alleged of our party now in power.

Corporal Tanner,

Keep your banner floating proudly in the air; It will cheer you and endeavor you to good people everywhere.

For the sayings and obeyings all our party must atone;

For our ravings and our cravings that we may only have our own.

To keep moving it's believing that the pledges you have taken

Be a token bravely spoken, shall never be forsaken.

Keep revealing kindred feeling, for you've felt the shock of war.

And you can mellow for a fellow who has an honored scar.

Corporal Tanner, hang your banner high on the outer wall.

Do your duty without booty, and we'll bless you, one and all.

\*A German composer—reputed originator of the nocturne.

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